



Quality Standards



Step 1

Apply for Step Up to Quality

Programs must complete the requirements listed below. The Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System is an online system accessed at <http://ecrecords.education.ne.gov>

- The director (licensee/owner) completes a program application in the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System.
- The director (licensee/owner) agrees to and signs the Step Up to Quality Release Statement.
- Each staff member in the program completes a personal professional record in the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System. Each staff member must have an individual email address.
- The director (licensee/owner) or family child care home primary provider completes the Step Up to Quality Orientation.

Step 2

When programs begin working toward Step 2, they should first contact the NDE Step Up to Quality office for a Coach Interest Questionnaire. After completing the Coach Interest Questionnaire, programs complete the requirements listed below.

| Center-Based program director/owner or designee completes the following training | | Family Child Care Home licensee/owner completes the following training | |
|--|------------|--|------------|
| | | | |
| Safe with You Series | 4 hours | Safe with You Series | 4 hours |
| Early Learning Guidelines Domain Series | 42 hours | Early Learning Guidelines Domain Series | 42 hours |
| Management Training Program | 45 hours | Getting Down to Business | 20 hours |
| Orientation to Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) | 20 minutes | Orientation to Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) | 20 minutes |
| AND | | AND | |
| Submit the NAP SACC Pre Self-Assessment covering all 5 areas – nutrition, physical activity, outdoor play, screen time, and infant feeding/breastfeeding | | Submit the NAP SACC Pre Self-Assessment covering all 5 areas – nutrition, physical activity, outdoor play, screen time, and infant feeding/breastfeeding | |

Directors/Owners/Licensees (Child Care Centers and Preschools), licensees (Family Child Care Home I), and primary provider (Family Child Care Home II) who have previously completed the Early Learning Guidelines Domain Training Series, Management Training Program, or Getting Down to Business do not need to retake the series provided the training can be verified through the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System at the NDE Early Childhood Training Center.

Steps 3 – 4 – 5

Programs wanting to work toward Steps 3-5 must first indicate that to the NDE Step Up to Quality office. Programs need to designate a lead person who is responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met.

Programs must select at least one observation scale, either the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) **OR** the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and complete the required training for that scale.

- If the program selects the ERS, the required training is *Introduction to the ERS*.
- If the program selects CLASS, the required training is *CLASS Introduction*.

Programs are encouraged to also attend training about Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC), and to develop and implement a program improvement plan based on the results of a self-assessment using the ERS, CLASS, and/or NAP SACC. A coach will be very helpful to assist programs with program improvement plans.

The program rating for Steps 3-5 is determined by the number of points the program earns during an independent observation and by review of the quality indicators defined for Steps 3-5. Program must earn at least 1 point in each standard area. Programs must earn at least 30 points in order to be rated at Step 3.

| Points Needed | Rating |
|------------------------|--------|
| 30 – 50 points earned | Step 3 |
| 51 – 79 points earned | Step 4 |
| 80 – 100 points earned | Step 5 |

The number of points possible for each standard area is listed in the chart below.

| Quality Standards | Possible Points |
|--|-----------------|
| Program Curriculum, Learning Environments, and Interactions | |
| Classroom/FCC Home Environment | 56 Points |
| Curriculum, Learning and Staff Support | 10 Points |
| Child Outcomes | 9 Points |
| Professional Development and Ongoing Training | 11 Points |
| Family Engagement and Partnerships | 6 Points |
| Program Administration | 8 Points |
| Total Possible Points | 100 Points |

Quality Standards and Indicators

Quality Standard 1: Program Curriculum, Learning Environment and Interaction (66 Possible Points)

1A: Classroom/FCC Home Environment (56 Possible Points)

| Quality Indicator |
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| Training |
| The program lead designee attends the training <i>Introduction to the Environment Rating Scale</i> . |
| The program lead designee attends the training <i>Practice Using the Environment Rating Scale</i> . |
| The program lead designee attends the training <i>Introduction to the CLASS</i> . |
| The program lead designee attends the training <i>CLASS Observation</i> . |
| The program lead designee completes the <i>NAP SACC</i> training. |
| Quality Improvement Plans |
| The program lead designee completes a Quality Improvement plan based upon the ERS self-assessment. |
| The program lead designee completes a Quality Improvement plan based upon CLASS self-assessment. |
| The program lead designee completes an Action Planning Document based upon the NAP SACC Pre Self-Assessment. |
| Observations |
| Environment Rating Scale (ERS) |
| There are three ERS Scales: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) for children from birth to 2 and ½ years of age. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) for preschool-kindergarten aged children, from ages 2 through 5 years of age. Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) for family child care home programs. |

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

There are three CLASS Observation tools:

CLASS Infant

CLASS Toddler

CLASS PreKindergarten (PreK)

For Center-Based programs at least 30 percent of groups (classrooms) of children will be randomly selected for observation. At least one group (classroom) will be selected from each age group.

NAP SACC Post Self-Assessment Results

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) has 3 components:

Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Policy and Practices

Nutrition Policy and Practices

Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy and Practices

1B: Curriculum and Staff Supports (10 Possible Points)

Quality Indicator

The program utilizes an evidence-based/developmentally appropriate curriculum.

The program curriculum aligns with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines.

Lead teaching staff or Family Child Care Home owner are trained on the Program Curriculum

Lead Teaching Staff or Family Child Care Home owner complete the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Domain Training Series.

The program provides a curriculum that incorporates nutrition and/or physical activity for children

Quality Standard 2: Child Outcomes (9 Possible Points)

Quality Indicator

Developmental screening is conducted within 90 days of a child's enrollment and the results are shared with families.

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| Ongoing assessment of children's strengths and needs are aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines and are used to develop education plans, monitor progress, and inform instruction. |
| The program conducts a periodic review and use of child assessment data for continuous program improvement. |
| The program shares individualized child data from ongoing assessments with families. |
| The program provides evidence of family involvement in the development of transition plans for individual children. |
| The program has a procedure in place to meet with community service providers for IFSP and/or IEP planning for children with special needs. |
| The program staff participate in IFSP and/or IEP planning for children with special needs. |

Quality Standard 3: Professional Development and Ongoing Training (11 Possible Points)

| Center Director | |
|--|---|
| CDA or One Year Certificate/Diploma related to ECE from Community College or higher | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals |
| Has at least 20 Semester Credit Hours in Early Childhood Education | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood providers. |
| AA/AAS in ECE or related field | Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| BA in ECE or related field | Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| MA in ECE or related field | Level Six of Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| 25% have CDA or One Year Certificate/Diploma related to ECE from Community College or higher | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| 25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in early childhood education | Level Three of Nebraska's Core competencies for Early Childhood providers. |
| 25% have AA/AAS or higher in ECE or related field | Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| 25% have BA or higher in ECE or related field | Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| 25% have CDA or One Year Certificate/Diploma related to ECE from | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |

| | |
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| Community College or higher | |
| 25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in early childhood education. | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Providers |
| 50% have CDA or One Year Certificate/Diploma related to ECE from Community College or higher | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| 25% have AA/AAS or higher in ECE or related field | Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| CDA or One Year Certificate/Diploma related to ECE from Community College or higher | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| FCCH provider has at least 20 semester credits hours in early childhood education. | Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals |
| AA /AAS in ECE or related field | Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| BA in ECE or related field | Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals |
| MA in ECE or related field | Level Six of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals |
| All full-time administrative/teaching staff has at least 24 clock hours of in-service training per calendar year (or 3 semester credit hours of college coursework per calendar year.) | A minimum of 4 clock hours of the 24 clock hours should be in the area of health and safety. |

Quality Standard 4: Family Engagement and Partnership (6 Possible Points)

| Quality Indicator |
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| The program honors the child's home language and encourages home language development by greeting children who are English Language-Learners (ELL) and their families in the home language or using simple phrases from a child's home language in daily communication with the child. |
| The program provides materials and resources in a way that is accessible to all families including ELL families. |
| The program informs families when there will be a change in teacher or a substitute teacher, when a field trip is planned, when a child will change classrooms. |
| The program has communication strategies for informing families about their children's learning and development. |

There is a defined procedure for the family to provide feedback to the program.

Quality Standard 5: Program Administration (8 Possible Points)

| Quality Indicator |
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| Center-based programs: The program has procedures for orienting new staff, and assistant(s) to the program. The program has a written staff handbook. |
| Family Child Care Programs: The program has procedures for orienting assistants and/or substitutes to the program including meeting children and families before assuming responsibilities. |
| There are self-assessments or appraisals of teaching staff competencies and professional development plans for improving skills. |
| Center-Based Programs: A written salary scale or a plan for compensation of all teaching staff, substitutes, and assistants in the program is defined and implemented taking into account staff education and years of experience. |
| Family Child Care Programs: A plan for compensation of owners, substitutes and assistants working in the family child care home is defined and implemented taking into account staff education and years of experience. |
| The program has a budget that projects income and expenses annually. |
| The program reports income to the IRS and claims expenses related to the program. |
| The program has records to keep track of income and expenses. |
| The program has a written agreement with the families for hours of operation, days the program is closed, fees, and a fee payment schedule, including late fees. |
| The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. |